

Dear Brethren,

April 30, 2007

Thank you so much for your help on our mission to build church buildings. The church in Mexico is judged by its buildings. The people expect a cathedral when someone invites them to worship. Many are put off by meeting in a house or under a tree. Rick and Sherry Owens have been organizing groups to build church buildings for 19 years so that the church in Mexico can grow. The Petersville church we attend in Florence has been involved in this for 7 years. Members from the North Carolina Church of Christ (started in Alabama by settlers from NC) have been coming also. The following is our travel log.

### **The Ride**

We left on Friday, the 13<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 in the morning. Jesse and Janet rode in The Petersville bus and Mary and I rode in the North Carolina church van. We rode all day and spent the night in Beaumont, TX. The next day we rode along the coast of Texas, arriving at Brownsville that evening. On Sunday morning, I preached at the Spanish speaking Tyler St. Church in Brownsville. I spoke in English on John 14:1, "Let not your hearts be troubled". One of the brothers there took my lesson and translated it for the worship service on Sunday night. The brethren provided a wonderful lunch of tostadas and pizza. Linda, one of the preachers' daughters, led us to South Padre Island. This was our first view of the Gulf of Mexico. Many enjoyed wading in the water.

### **The Work**

Monday morning through Thursday afternoon, all 34 of us from AL worked at 2 sites. The first was a small congregation with land between a house and a tortilla shop facing a future highway and a Catholic church. The first day Jesse passed rebar up to the second story roof. Mary and I helped cut and pass rebar, while Janet pulled and straightened nails. All boards and nails are reused in the work in Mexico. The second day Mary and I straightened nails. Janet filled gaps around windows with cement and Jesse helped build an interior wall with one of Petersville's elders. A group of 43 teens and adults from New England congregations were in the same hotel and worked at a church near us. On the third and fourth days we went to help them. The boards which held up the second story roof of a school of preaching were knocked out and passed to the ground. Those boards needed sorting and nails pulled and straightened.

I was able to use my limited Spanish to speak to a Mexican preacher who wanted to learn English. Mary passed out lollipops and balloons to children in the church and community. Janet's soccer ball provided an easy way for her to communicate with the kids we met in the afternoons. Jesse made friends among the teens from Connecticut and Massachusetts.

### **Ups and Downs of Missions**

Janet learned how it feels to hit a thumb with a hammer and get a blood blister. Jesse tore some clothes and tried not to get too much sun. I got slightly sunburned on the first day. Mary and I were sore and tired. One of the hardest parts of mission work happened on Thursday: We said our goodbyes. One of the local preachers, Santiago, gave a wonderful thank you speech, interpreted for us of course. Ahead lay a three day ride. It was not a comforting thought. We made it to Houston on Thursday and went to the Houston Zoo on Friday. It was great to see zebras, giraffes and rhinos. (NO, we did not see any of these in our 10 years in Nigeria!) Jesse led Mary and me to the reptile house where we saw snakes, turtles and a white alligator. At 6:15 pm on Saturday, a very happy and tired bunch reached the Petersville church building. God blessed our trip and our lives. Thank you for sharing in this work with us through your prayers and support.

Love, in Christ,

Dave, Mary, Jesse and Janet